

THE SOCIAL SECURITY WIDOWS
AND SPOUSAL PROTECTION ACT

HON. CHELLIE PINGREE

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Madam Speaker, I am here today to introduce a bill that addresses a serious problem that affects many retired federal and state employees in Maine and across the nation.

Public servants have performed incredibly important services for their communities and country, but sadly many are being driven into poverty because of the Government Pension Offset, GPO. Of the 5,300 workers in Maine subject to this provision, 3,700 lose all of their Social Security widows or spousal benefits to the GPO. I just don't think that's fair for people who have devoted years to public service.

The effects of the current Government Pension Offset formula are most dramatic on lower income women—79% of beneficiaries affected by the GPO are women. After raising their families and serving the public, these women are devastated by losing most or all of their Social Security benefits after the already overwhelming loss of their spouses to death or divorce.

The legislation I am proposing is targeted at lifting out of poverty those hardest hit by the GPO. It would eliminate the GPO for beneficiaries whose combined monthly pension and Social Security widows or spousal benefits before offset is less than half the maximum Social Security benefit. Others would see a graduated Government Pension Offset. Under this formula, no one would see a reduction in their Social Security benefits and those in the lower incomes would have benefits raised to a livable rate.

I am pleased that the legislation has earned the support of both the Maine Education Association and the Maine State Employees Association. Lorraine Noel, President of the Maine Federation of Chapters for the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, states, "This legislation is a good first step in addressing the injustices caused by the Government Pension Offset."

Make no mistake, I remain committed to completely repealing the GPO and the Windfall Elimination Provision, and have cosponsored a bill to do so. But in a struggling economy, measures to overturn these offsets are difficult. I hope this incremental reform will alleviate the worst effects on those most damaged by the Government Pension Offset and bring our vulnerable public servants out of poverty.

Please join me in supporting the Social Security Widows and Spousal Protection Act of 2010. We should not have someone's years of public service be the cause of their poverty.

RECOGNIZING NOVACO AND THE
RECIPIENTS OF THE 2010 VOLUNTEER
OF THE YEAR AWARDS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor NOVACO and to recognize the recipients of the 2010 Volunteer of the Year Awards.

NOVACO is committed to helping homeless victims of domestic violence become healthy, secure, and self-sufficient. Victims of domestic violence often feel that they have no safe place to turn. Fear, financial uncertainty, and the feeling of isolation often imprison these victims in abusive environments. When a victim breaks free, he or she can too easily end up homeless and alone.

Domestic violence affects every racial, ethnic, and socio-economic group. Many of us know a friend, neighbor, or family member who has been victimized. More than 15 million children in the United States live in families in which partner violence occurred at least once in the past year. Each day, 3 women die as a result of domestic violence. More than 1 in 4 women will be the victim of domestic abuse in her lifetime; more than 3 of 4 Americans know someone who has been victimized.

For more than a decade NOVACO has provided critical services to homeless families who have escaped domestic abuse and who are seeking to rebuild their lives and become self-sufficient. Assistance is provided in many areas including transitional and permanent housing, counseling, childcare, education, job training, and life skills classes. Through the robust support of area businesses and churches, NOVACO has grown into a leader in breaking the cycle of domestic violence.

NOVACO has initiated a number of innovative programs that have resulted in significant advancements for those in need. Their "Good Neighbor" program connects client families with sponsors to assist them in transitioning to self-sufficiency. Through the financial management courses, women have learned how to manage their financial affairs, addressing one of the most daunting aspects of escaping domestic abuse.

NOVACO is strengthened by the dedication of its volunteers. I am honored to recognize the following 2010 Volunteers of the Year: Volunteer of the Year: Joen Schultz Volunteer Group of the Year: Gracing Spaces Volunteer Business of the Year: Brookfield Homes Outstanding Community Support Award: King of Kings Lutheran Church

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing NOVACO, its volunteers and other supporters for their tireless work on behalf of so many who feel stranded and powerless. NOVACO is making a difference in our community, and I pledge to continue working with NOVACO and similar organizations to put an end to domestic abuse.

TRIBUTE TO SPENCER C. DISHER,
JR. M.D.

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding physician and community leader as he retires and enters a new phase of his life. Dr. Spencer Disher of Orangeburg, South Carolina, has served the medical profession and his community admirably for half a century.

Spencer Disher was born in Darlington, South Carolina, and graduated as Salutatorian of his class at Mayo High School. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from South Carolina State College, now University, and entered Meharry Medical College in Nashville in 1956. Following graduation, he trained for a year at Kate B. Reynolds Hospital and served two years in the U.S. Army. While serving as an Army Captain, Dr. Disher was the Chief Physician for the Pentathlon athletes on the U.S. Olympic Team.

In 1963, Dr. Disher returned to South Carolina and began his medical practice in Orangeburg. He has also served as the college physician at Voorhees College, Denmark Technical College and Claflin University, where he currently serves as Medical Director of Student Health Services. He also holds the position of State Grand Medical Director for the Masons of South Carolina.

In addition to practicing medicine, Dr. Disher has been very involved in organizations that support and advance the profession. He has served as the Chair of the Grants and Proposal Committee of the Board of Trustees of the National Medical Association, and is a member of South Carolina Board of Medical Examiners. He was the Chief of Staff at The Regional Medical Center in Orangeburg. For eleven years, Dr. Disher served as chair of the Executive Board of the Palmetto State Medical Dental Pharmaceutical Association, PMDPA. He also served as president of the PMDPA in 1975. He chaired the Public Health and Consumer Affairs Committee of the National Medical Association, NMA, for over a decade.

Dr. Disher is currently a member of the Meharry Medical College Board of Trustees, and has been a staunch advocate of the school. Two of his sons have graduated from Meharry. He has established the Spencer C. Disher, Jr., M.D. Endowed Scholarship to enable students from South Carolina to pursue their dream of studying for Medical, Dental or a Doctorate Degree in the Biomedical Sciences at Meharry Medical College.

Dr. Disher has been recognized by many organizations including Alpha Phi Alpha and Omega Psi Phi Fraternities. He is a member of the New Mount Zion Baptist Church. In addition to his many professional affiliations, he is a 33rd Degree Mason, a Shriner, and a member of the NAACP. Dr. Disher is married to the former Annette Moorer, and is the father of eight children.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in celebrating the wonderful professional contributions of Dr. Spencer Disher. He has distinguished himself as doctor who cares not only for the patient but for the community as a whole. He has been a tremendous leader and a consummate professional throughout his career, and I am proud to call him a friend. I wish him Godspeed in retirement and know that he will continue to play an important part in the Orangeburg community for years to come.

HONORING THE REPUBLIC OF
TURKEY'S 87TH REPUBLIC DAY

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, as a co-chair of the Congressional Caucus